

Testimony of Faith Gavin Kuhn
On Behalf of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association

Before the General Law Committee
March 11, 2014

Testimony on HB 5491: An Act Concerning Customer Sales and Service Calls Made From Outside the
United States

Good Afternoon. My name is Faith Gavin Kuhn and I am Communication Lobbyist for the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA represents more than 10,000 employers throughout Connecticut ranging from one-person businesses to large corporations. However, the majority of our members have fewer than fifty employees.

CBIA opposes HB 5491: An Act Concerning Customer Sales and Service Calls Made From Outside the United States as proposed.

The intent of HB 5491 is to provide customers with notice and certain options regarding the outsourcing of customer sales and service calls. While the bill may be well intended, CBIA members have concerns about the costs of implementing the proposed mandates HB 5491 recommends.

In particular, the telecommunication cable companies, insurance companies, banking, finance and any company in the U.S. with a call center that has customers in Connecticut would be affected by HB 5491 if the company utilizes any kind of off-shore call center or phone bank to supplement their customer service. CT companies operate in a highly competitive, global marketplace that requires them to have the operational flexibility to provide support services in a manner that best serves their customers. No other state in America has passed such notification standards that HB 5491 presents.

Connecticut would be the FIRST state to introduce such requirements.

Being first is not always good for Connecticut. Companies with call centers in CT would, should HB 5491 be approved, undertake the expensive endeavor to re-train their employees and modify their day-to-day operations. For example, it would likely require taking CT employees off the call center phones, putting them in classrooms, re-train managers, instructors, and frontlines employees. The unintended consequences of HB 5491 would also require re-writing computer software programs, re-writing operational procedures, and ultimately it would mean longer wait times to serve CT customers.

At the risk of sounding like a recorded message, CBIA believes that HB 5491 would not be a "business friendly" measure. In fact, it would be just the opposite. Companies who currently have call centers in CT may re-think their CT location if HB 5491 was enacted. In addition, HB 5491 with its additional notification and request options would not serve as an invite to potential and new call center businesses in CT. HB 5491 would add another layer of call center requirements that would unfortunately mute CT's economic development and not provide any better service to call center customers.

CBIA urges you to reject HB 5491.